

BIOSAFETY

NEWSLETTER

No 6



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Introduction

Since issue no.5 of our UNEP-GEF Biosafety newsletter in April, the following activities have been completed: the third series of sub-regional workshops; the first workshop on the development of training materials for the BCH project; a 4th toolkit module has been prepared and released; and four new members of staff have joined the Biosafety Unit.

Updates in this issue include project highlights on:

1. THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

- The third series of sub-regional training workshops
- The fourth toolkit module
- Current status of the development Project

2. THE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

- Training on enabling legislation, implementing regulations, users' guides and internal manuals

3. THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE PROJECT

4. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

- a) Activities and events
- b) Staff movements

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORKS PROJECT

The third series of sub-regional training workshops

Between 11 and 14 May, the third series of sub-regional workshops was completed in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. This concluded a series of 12 workshops which started in November 2002 and which were held in Asia and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Anglophone and Francophone Africa, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America.

Topics addressed at the workshops comprised developing regulatory regimes and administrative systems – key issues related to the development of National Biosafety Frameworks in participating countries.

In total, 979 country representatives from 138 countries attended the sub-regional workshops. The results from these workshops and their reports may be viewed on the website: <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/devdocuments.htm>

The fourth toolkit module

The first part of the module for Phase 3 on drafting of the NBF, which focuses on the development of the regulatory regime, is now available at:

<http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/development/devdocuments/ToolkitBSF3%28i%29EN.pdf>

The second part of the module for Phase 3, on the formulation and design of the administrative systems for handling applications and notifications will be available later in 2004. Translations of this toolkit module in other UN languages will also be made available later in 2004.

Current status of the development Project

- 123 developing countries are currently participating in the Project
- 8 draft national biosafety frameworks (NBFs) have been produced
- 50 more drafts are expected by end 2004

MILESTONE: the 100th country to join the Development project has just submitted its draft NBF. Cambodia's NBF is available on our website at : <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/development/Countryreports/KHNBFrep.pdf>

2. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORKS PROJECTS

Training was provided in Geneva from 24-26 May, on specific topics as requested by Bulgaria and Namibia. These topics included identifying which types of provisions are typically included in enabling legislation, implementing regulations, users' guides and internal manuals. Taking into account the fact that participating countries may share similar experiences and face similar issues during the course of the Projects, lawyers from Cameroon, Kenya and Uganda were also invited to participate in the training, which related to issues that they were addressing.

The Implementation toolkit for the biosafety protocol, which was adopted by MOP1, was used as a basis for this training exercise.

3. THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE PROJECT

In March 2004, the GEF Secretariat gave final approval to the BCH project. Further to this approval a workshop on the Development of Training Materials was held in Bossey, Switzerland on 3-4 May. The purpose of the workshop was to investigate various ways in which the development of the training

programme for the BCH could be moved forward in an expeditious and efficient manner. For the full workshop report, please consult:

<http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/BCH/BCHDocuments/BCHwkshprptMay.pdf>

Currently, 50 out of 61 countries eligible to participate in the project have sent endorsement letters to the Biosafety team indicating their wish to participate in the project. Additionally, a Regional workshop for the Pacific Island countries is being organized in November to assist, with the support of Environment Canada, identify needs and requirements for a regional Biosafety clearing House, which is proposed to be hosted by SPREP in Samoa. Six countries of the 50 mentioned above, have forwarded names of their BCH Task Force members and these can now be found on our website:

<http://www.unep.ch/biosafety>.

To respond to the guidance received from COP7-MOP1 to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNEP-GEF has submitted a project to be included in the work programme of the next GEF Council meeting, which will meet in November 2004, to expand the project to include another 89 countries, bringing the total number of countries eligible to participate in the project to 139.

In the coming months, look for a handbook on participating in the project, as well as, the training modules, as they are developed. All will be available through the website mentioned above. Please also be on the lookout for a call for IT and

CPB experts from the four regions that the project is assisting. The call will be made as widely as possible and also through reputable international and regional magazines.

4. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

a) Activities and events

UNEP and Biosafety capacity building presentation

The Biosafety team, in conjunction with the GEN (Geneva Environment Network), will be hosting a presentation in Geneva - “*UNEP and Biosafety capacity building*” - on 12 October between 09h00 and 12h30. The presentation will give an overview of the development, BCH and the implementation Projects, followed by a question and answer session with Programme Managers and Regional Coordinators. Refreshments will be provided.

b) Staff movements

Departed...

Two members of the Implementation projects team - David Heron (Task Manager) and Piet van der Meer (Projects Manager)- left our team in May. We wish them both success in their new endeavours.

Arrived...

We welcome the following new members of staff:

Our new Implementation Projects Manager, Fee Chon Low, joined the team in June, on a temporary basis, while the recruitment goes ahead. Fee Chon has served as a resource person for UNEP in biotechnology and biosafety over the last 10 years and recently completed her service as Head of Biosafety Secretariat, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, Malaysia.

Yenny Ezquerro joined our team in June, as Administrative/Programme Clerk, and will be involved in BCH activities, including providing

support to the BCH Task Manager and eligible countries.

Frédéric Vogel was appointed BCH Programme Officer in June and will be dealing with IT and technical matters relating to the BCH project.

Helena Hall joined the team as Administrative Assistant in July and will be involved in general administration, staff matters and office management.

For more information, please contact us at:

**UNEP/GEF Biosafety Unit
15 Chemin des Anémones
1219 Chatelaine, Geneva
Switzerland**

**Tel: +41 22 917 8410
Fax: +41 22 917 8070**

e-mail: biosafety@unep.ch

**or visit our website:
<http://www.unep.ch/biosafety>**